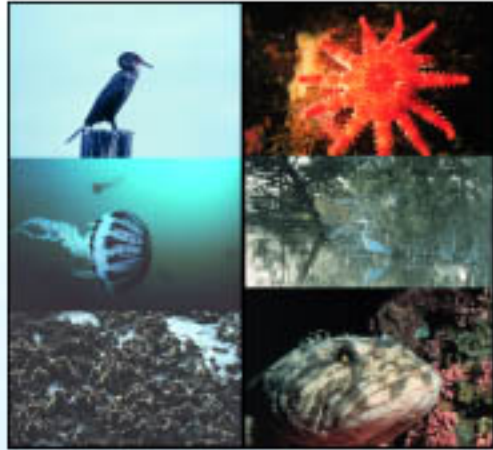


Examples of Reserve Designation Criteria

Does the site contain a large number of species and habitats (Does the site have high biodiversity)?



By protecting the areas that contain the most species, habitats and ecosystem processes we can help ensure the preservation of a wide range of species and habitats. Aquatic habitats known to contain large numbers of different species include bays, convergence zones and structurally diverse habitats.

A point of caution in focusing on biodiversity is that species rich areas are often of intermediate habitat quality and may be dominated by cosmopolitan or invasive species.

Is the site in relatively pristine/unaltered condition?



Sites that are fully functional and in a relatively pristine condition are more predictable in their behavior and more resilient to minor insults than heavily degraded sites. Unfortunately, very few sites, even in marine waters, have avoided direct human influence or degradation.

Is the site threatened by historic, current or proposed activities?



Threats to a site may originate within or outside of the site. Additionally, threats may be from past activities (e.g., habitat alteration or dike building); present activities (e.g., stormwater outfalls); or proposed activities (e.g., development plans).

Some threats may be effectively managed by reserve designation, while others may not.

Does the site contain habitats or features that are not protected in the existing reserve network?



Several marine protected areas already exist in Washington. Our goal is to enhance the value of this network of protected areas by capturing species, habitats or processes not already protected.

Is the site important for regional connectivity among protected areas?



Protected areas will seldom capture enough habitat to fully support target species or habitats. Therefore, the goal is to protect the range of habitats required for species to spawn, rear, migrate and mature.

Is the site manageable?



Sites that are small or have irregular boundaries are often difficult to manage. It is difficult to know when you are within a small reserve, and sites with irregular boundaries create confusion. The effectiveness of a reserve is highly dependent on the quality of protection and management of the reserve.